



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sarah DeVido, or Sarah.DeVido@noaa.gov
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

April 17, 2007
FB07-016

VERMILION SNAPPER COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS WILL CLOSE AT 12:01 A.M., LOCAL TIME, APRIL 22, 2007

NOAA Fisheries Service announces the commercial fishery for vermilion snapper in Gulf of Mexico federal waters will close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on April 22, 2007, and reopen at midnight, local time, on May 31, 2007. This closure is required by regulations implemented through the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's (Gulf Council) Amendment 23 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico, which NOAA Fisheries Service implemented on July 8, 2005, to end overfishing and rebuild the vermilion snapper stock.

A new stock assessment, completed in March 2006, indicates vermilion snapper is no longer overfished or undergoing overfishing, and the current harvest is below the optimal level.

Therefore, NOAA Fisheries Service is currently reviewing a regulatory amendment submitted by the Gulf Council, which would increase the harvest of vermilion snapper. One of the actions proposed in that amendment would eliminate the commercial vermilion snapper closure announced in this bulletin.

The comment period for the proposed rule that would eliminate the seasonal closure and modify other vermilion snapper management measures is expected to occur in the near future and will be announced in a fishery bulletin. The length of time the closure remains in effect will be shortened if the closure is eliminated through a final rule before May 31, 2007. If this occurs, NOAA Fisheries Service will publish another fishery bulletin to announce the fishery is reopening early.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
PERMIT NO. G-19

National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office, F/SER24
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Official Business
Penalty for Private Use - \$ 300
FB07-016